

City of Rockville Environment Commission

Sustainable Development and Energy Committee (SDEC)

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday January 25, 2011

Diamondback Terrapin Room, City Hall

7:00 pm

1. Welcome / Agenda Review/ Minutes Adoption

- In attendance: Alicia Hosmer, Christine Davidson-McCord, Zhimei Luo and staff liaison Erica Shingara.

2. High Performance Building (Green Building) Tax Credit Proposal

- The Chamber of Commerce and the Chair of the Environment Commission presented the tax credit proposal to the Mayor and Council on November 8th. Since the proposal presentation, local businesses have been providing testimony at Citizens Forum on the benefits of the proposal.
- A phased-in budget approach (e.g., \$50,000 the first year) could minimize budget impacts but allow for the tax credit program to ramp-up over a 3 to 5 year period.
- The first step to create the program would be to allocate funding in the FY 2012 budget. Subsequently, Chapter 22 of the City Code, "Taxation," would need to be amended to establish the tax credit program. There would opportunities for the Chamber and SDEC to provide input on the tax credit structure and requirements.
- Future budget work sessions and public hearings: 4/4, 4/11, 5/2, 5/9

3. U.S. EPA Green Power Community Challenge (GPCC)

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Green Power Community Challenge is a national campaign to encourage communities across the nation to use green power and promote environmental sustainability, energy innovation, and a reduction in carbon emissions.
- During the Challenge, Rockville will encourage residents and businesses to switch their energy sources to clean energy. The Challenge is anticipated to run from March through August. During this time period, Rockville will track and report the community's collective green power use to EPA. At the conclusion of the national Challenge, the community with the highest green power percentage and the community that uses the most kilowatt-hours (kWh) of green power will receive national recognition from EPA. The winning communities will be declared on September 20, 2011.
- There are three ways that Rockville residents and businesses can help the City achieve the Green Power Community Challenge goal:
 - Purchase Clean Energy from a Supplier: Maryland residents and businesses are able to choose who supplies their electricity. The local utility, Pepco, will still deliver electricity, but they can select a company to generate the electricity.

- Purchase Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs): Purchasing Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) represent the environmental benefit of displacing pollution from traditional energy generated by fossil fuels.
- On-site Renewable Energy Generation: Install solar panels or other renewable energy technology at your home or business.
- The SDEC asked about the costs of green energy and how to participate:
 - Easiest way to participate: The online purchase of green power or RECs is the easiest way to participate (a Pepco account number is needed, there is no need for the installation of special equipment). Visit the U.S. Department of Energy's summary of the green power products and RECs available in Maryland: http://apps3.eere.energy.gov/greenpower/buying/buying_power.shtml?state=MD&print
 - Costs: The Maryland Office of People's Counsel summarizes energy price information (scroll to Pepco service area): <http://www.opc.state.md.us/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=VM3BFI-ScMY%3d&tabid=39>
 - Note: Prices and programs are subject to change.
- The Environment Commission unanimously voted to support the City's participation in the GPCC. The Education and Outreach Committee is evaluating outreach opportunities.
- The SDEC is needed to help support GPCC outreach: 1) switch to clean energy; 2) help present clear and concise information on costs; 3) brainstorm ways to encourage the community to participate; and 4) assist with distributing GPCC information online or at Science Day, the Spring festival, and Hometown Holidays.

4. Committee Structure

- Members indicated that new member recruitment is important to get a variety of perspectives and expertise. Suggestions included a high school representative and members with residential energy and green building expertise.
- The SDEC chair position is currently vacant. Davidson-McCord indicated that she would be interested in serving as chair.
- The SDEC staff liaison will not be available in April, May, and June. More information will be provided about SDEC activities and staff support.
- Potential SDEC projects in 2011: education and outreach for residential green building and energy programs, Green Power Community Challenge, Tax Credit, and providing input on the update of Environment Element of Comprehensive Master Plan (see chapter 5 of 2002 CMP at <http://www.rockvillemd.gov/masterplan/documents.html>)
 - Environment Element – Goals for updating element include drafting outline and general overview by April and developing a white paper by August. The update will expand the existing Environment Element to address elements of the built environment such as green building, energy, greenhouse gas emissions, and sustainability. SDEC members should review existing document and research model plans from other jurisdictions for discussion at the next SDEC. More information will follow.
 - SDEC suggested hosting a Going Green lecture on healthy, energy efficient homes that addresses how to improve home energy efficiency while protecting indoor air quality (e.g., how to avoid making a home too tight and causing mold

and indoor air quality problems). Suggested contacting a professional organization for a speaker.

5. Member News / Announcements / Upcoming Events

- Free Residential Home Energy Audit Seminar, January 26, 2011 at 7 p.m.
 - The SDEC indicated that it would be helpful for homeowners and contractors to have a list of the Federal, State, and local home energy incentives. This information will be distributed at the seminar and is available online at: http://www.rockvillemd.gov/environment/greenbuilding/residential_incentives.pdf
 - NOTE: Due to inclement weather, the 1/26 seminar was canceled. Staff hopes to rescheduled the event.
- Free Residential Renewable Energy Options Seminar, March 23, 2011 at 7 p.m.
 - The program will review ways to purchase clean energy or REC s from a supplier and factors to consider for the installation of on-site photovoltaic systems.
- Earth Month Events: <http://www.rockvillemd.gov/environment/earth-day.html>
- Nominations for Environmental Excellence Awards & Photo Contest needed (April 1, 2011 deadline):
 - Committee members should solicit or submit nominations for the following categories: Outstanding Individual Environmental Stewardship, Outstanding Environmental Education and Academic Achievement, Outstanding Leadership in Environmental Practices, and Outstanding Achievement in Green Building Technology and Design.
 - Potential Outstanding Achievement in Green Building Technology and Design: 701 Kilowatt Solar Energy System on the Rockville Ice Arena, which is the largest single rooftop solar energy system in Maryland.
- Spring Festival at Croydon Creek Nature Center, April 30th to include various environment information and activities as well as native plant and rain barrel sales.

6. No new business

7. Wrap-up and Adjourn

The next SDEC meeting will be **Tuesday, February 22, 2010** at the Rockville City Hall. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 pm.